Mr. Lighthall
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THE JUDGMENT OF OSIRIS.

By Hunter Duvar.

FYTTE THE FIRST.

Whether upon the earth I cannot tell,
Or in a higher or a lower sphere,
A horror of great darkness there befell,
But *where*, no mortal man can guess anear
Nor place be found by any ghostly seer,
It may be in the eons long agone
Light might have been, but daylight now was none.

Or it may well have been within some world
Where darkness never yet has ceased to reign
Nor the wing brooding o'er the deep been furled
To loose the laughing sunlight all amain;
Or in some star to chaos given again;
Or orb where disembodied spirits dwell,—
And that there be such many sagas tell.

Youth bloometh quick, but dies ere buds expand,
Age liveth slow yet comes to dust again,
While all the time death's not unkindly hand
Is never tired of gathering in the grain,
And when the loosened spirit 'scapes life's pain
Before some high Court is its plea appealed,
Its cause is judged of and its fate is sealed.

Therefore beneath this horror of the dark
Were shrouded mysteries, close-folded aye,
Within an orb of which the outer arc
Bounded by space and suns whereof no ray
Could penetrate the mirk wherein there lay
The Court of Souls, the dread Judiciary
Of great Osiris, Lord of Heaven! He!

O'er that dread judgment place there hung a pall,
Opaque, tenebrous, sullen, dire and dense,
Egyptian darkness seeming like a wall
Of velvet black through which no eyeball's lens
Could look and live, but blackness more intense
Than depths of subterranean caverns bear,
So untransparent was the motionless air.

A point of light oped in the solid dark,
A vivid pencil of bright blood-red hue,
Which slow and silent from the central spark
In vast concentric rings expanding grew
And through the orb a sanguine self-light threw
More awful than e'er sung by poet's lyre,
A circular background of red, rayless fire.

In centre of this red and glowing sphere
A thin and shifting smoky mist appeared
Which, denser growing, cast a murky smear
Upon the red, and flicked about and neared
The central point, till in some manner weird
The mist had taken substance and had grown
Into the semblance of an ebon throne.

This giant throne was massive-framed and railed
With seeming limbs of gnarled withered trees
But which were writhing serpens, sable scaled,
That never ceased to intertwist and squeeze

In the fair Nile-land
Wherein her name h
For all that other wo

Her color was of pall
Or as if paley-bronze
With faintly ruddy o
Of her fine figure c
Soft violet shadows
Her midnight-dark o
To her small feet and

Her countenance had
That marked the nob
The broad, low brow
Tinted, but where no
Straight nose, and in
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And the old blood of

A small, red mouth,
That lightly touched
Wearing a smile so
No man could look
Had he in life but se
And there she waite
Of all the shapes of

THE WATERSNAKE A

"Thou, Cleopatra, b
Wearer of Egypt's
The monarch's office
Unto the subjects, a
In pregnant myths t
To watch and ward
To the immortal Go

"Lord of the dead a
The world hath bee
My heart was full o
And my wrapt sens
At pleasant sounds
The air was blue, s
The moon was siste

"The fountains in o
Spoke mystically p
The bird-songs 'mo
Through sigh of re
The creeping of the
The blue of waters
In the stretched ar

"Were all a part o
I loved them—and
Did think benificen
Nor deem that joy
It may be true. I
I did not make my
These feelings that

"Fair Queen of
But is a charge of
And when it loiter

This giant throne was massive-framed and railed

In the fair Nile-land of the fruit and corn,
Wherein her name had been a synonym
For all that other women did bedim.

Her color was of pallid, perfect gold,
Or as if paley-bronze were lightly washed
With faintly ruddy ore, and where the mould
Of her fine figure carved and brightly flashed
Soft violet shadows hid as all abashed,
Her midnight-dark of tresses flowed adown
To her small feet and clothed her like a gown.

Her countenance had all the beauty rare
That marked the noble of Egyptian race,
The broad, low brow, the cheek beyond compare,
Tinted, but where no wrinkle you could trace,
Straight nose, and in the contour of her face
Her large, black, slanting eyes with lustre glowed,
And the old blood of Memnon-monarchs showed.

A small, red mouth, with arched lips firm and full
That lightly touched in form of archer's bow,
Wearing a smile so sweet and beautiful
No man could look on her but feel a glow,
Had he in life but seen her even so,
And there she waited, the one beauteous thing
Of all the shapes of that appalling ring.

THE WATERSNAKE APOPHIS, THE ACCUSER, SPEAKS:

"Thou, Cleopatra, born of Pharoh's line,
Wearer of Egypt's double diadem,
The monarch's office is to be a sign
Unto the subjects, and to culture them
In pregnant myths that grow from Seb his stem,
To watch and ward and lead them, and to bow
To the immortal Gods—what answerest thou?"

CLEOPATRA.

"Lord of the dead and quick! of heaven, O King!
The world hath been so very fair to me,
My heart was full of joy that made it sing,
And my wrapt senses thrilled so blissfully
At pleasant sounds to hear and sights to see,
The air was blue, sun glorified the skies,
The moon was sister and the stars were eyes.

"The fountains in oases, where they sang,
Spoke mystically pleasant words to me,
The bird-songs 'mong the tendrils as they rang
Through sigh of reeds and murmur of the tree,
The creeping of the Nile through lilied lea,
The blue of waters where my galleys lay
In the stretched arms of the Canopian bay.

"Were all a part of me—than diadem
I loved them—and (although I could not know)
Did think benificence had given us them,
Nor deem that joy could work us any woe.
It may be true. I know not. Be it so,
I did not make myself. Did I create
These feelings that they should affect my fate?"

ACCUSER.

"Fair Queen of men, power bideth not in sloth,
But is a charge of ever watchful care,
And when it loiters as the sluggard doth,

The giant throne was massive-framed and railed
With seeming limbs of gnarled withered trees
But which were writhing serpens, sable scaled,
That never ceased to intertwist and squeeze
One on the other. As caryatides
Seven living sphinxes did the throne upbear
And with their long eyes looked out from their lair.

Soon other mists came shimmering on the red
In soft, thin vapors like the wave of wings
Of wandering sprites that round the centre sped,
And drawing near the centre of the rings
Grew dense, till the unreal flickerings
Formed into corporal figures, towering tall,
And stood embodied, forty-two in all.

The Assesors these. One for each mortal sin.
An awsome company with heads of bears,
Bulls, lions, rams, and apes with ghastly grin,
Cats, crocodiles and vulture-beaks. In pairs
They all were ranged beside the throne on stairs,
O'er each head swaled a feather, and edged brands
Were upright held in all their mummied hands.

Higher than these the Genii of the dead,
Headed as man, as jackal, hawk and ape,
The four dread Masters who do cut the thread
And let the sprite forth flee from out the shape
And mortal coil that lies with mouth agape;
These four were there to witness what might be
The fate of the sad souls they had sent free.

And with them dog-faced Anubis, the guide
Who from the genii's liberating hands
Leads forth the souls and sails upon the tide
Until it safely reach the shadowy strands,
Freed from the effete body's swathing bands,
Where timid for its doings, or elate,
It waits to cross the lintel of the gate.

Right of the throne stood Horus, also known
As Har the Child, fair-haired and double-crowned,
With falcon visage, around which was blown
His sunny hair, by sunlight more embrowned,
He 'twas that in his vengeance was renowned
On Typhon, and sought out the scattered limbs
Of his slain sire—as say Osirid hymns.

First on the left the moon-god Thoth there stood
With ibis face, and held the golden scale
Wherein to weigh the evil and the good,
And pen of record to record the tale
That measures out the benefit and bale,
A crescent moon lit up his curling hair
With rays like to an aureole of the air.

The others ranged alike on either hand:—
Shu the preventer, Nubt of the south, grim Bes
Abhorrent pigmy hated in the land,
Ra of the sunlight whom the people bless,
Priapian Khem, Khons with the single tress,
Kheph with the scarabeus, mummy bound,
And Atum lord of On the lotus-crowned.

Apophis the watersnake who brings
The accusation 'gainst the soul set free,
The nine Temara gods, masters of things,
Great Phthah, besides the Abstract They who be
Of Years, Age, Life and of Eternity,
All these and more were ranged in line of state
And with an air expectant seemed to wait.

Thus all these lurid forms personified
The qualities that judge the accused soul,
Each one to watch the faults the living hide
Of all the two and forty sins of dole,
Each sin full written on a penal scroll—
O awful lesson this, that under sun
No soul can 'scape the deeds in body done.

Until, inscrutably, an august Shape,

"Fair Queen of men, power bideth not in sloth,
But is a charge of ever watchful care,
And when it loiters as the sluggard doth,
The governed land oftimes becometh bare
And faimant subjects neither do nor dare,
But in their discontent like serpents hiss
In environs plotting. What sayest thou to this?"

CLEOPATRA.

"What wars were waged? what draft of fighting men?
What sands with gore were moistened in my reign?
Boats swum, steeds ramped, slaves builded, and the pen
Papyri wrote. Corn yellowed on the plain,
None said the monarch's case was people's bane,
Men lived and toiled at craft or trade and died,
Nor 'gainst me up to heaven their ghosts have cried."

ACCUSER.

"Accused! the gods claim worship."

CLEOPATRA.

"Through my land
The gods *had* worship. At the feasts of state
I oft was present, nay and with my hand
Did pet the white bull Apis, nor abate
The wine libations where the godheads sate,
Nor fail to place fresh flowers upon the lids
Of the kings' tombs are in the pyramids,

"If that I shuddered at the sight of gore
Of fawns and cooing doves and did recoil
From blood of living innocent things, the more
Did I bring to the alters corn and oil,
Fruits, flowers, and products of the soil,
Gum and frankincense and the woods of trees
My sea-ships brought from many lands and seas.

"The temples' walls I tincted with hieroglyph
And sculptured sacred figures on the planes;
Made alters misty with the pungent whiff
Of spikenard; fed the priests and ibis cranes,
And placed new sphinxes on the avenue lanes
At temple gates, and lengthened out the line
Of mystic obelisks and forms divine.

"As woman I reverenced the Women Gods,
Athor the lady of the dance and glee,
Mistress of turquoises,—as say her odes,
Isis the mother veiled in mystery,
Full-bosomed Maya, for [illegible]x is she,
These I adored by loving all things fair,
For adoration is in praise, not prayer."

ACCUSER.

"Wanton! once of Two Egypt's crowned queen,
In thy luxurious and voluptuous life
Leman of sea-barbarians hast thou been,
Thus bringing luxury on the land, and strife."

CLEOPATRA.

"How could a Queen Egypt stoop to wife?
If that my hot blood surged as doth the sea
The blame lay with the gods and not with me."

The crowd of the spectator dead stayed still
Nor did they, at demand and countermand,
Lay on the soul at bar ought charge of ill
Nor yet did tell good deeds done in the land;
Nor advocate did take the cause in hand,
But the accused stood, no one by her side,
Calm, proud, imperious, haught and monarch-eyed

Then Thoth the writer took his tablet up
Where he had writ the record clear and fair,
And Anubis the weigher placed the cup
Of good deeds done in one scale to compare,
And in the other laid the brazen square

And with an air expectant [illegible] to wait.

Thus all these lurid forms personified
The qualities that judge the accused soul,
Each one to watch the faults the living hide
Of all the two and forty sins of dole,
Each sin full written on a penal scroll—
O awful lesson this, that under sun
No soul can 'scape the deeds in body done.

Until, inscrutably, an august Shape,
That had not entered, grew upon the eye
As grows the outline of a giant cape
From out the sea mists, so was seen anigh
Amid these fearsome courtiers standing by,
A Presence vast, majestic, magian, lone,
The Great OSIRIS seated on his throne.

A countenance so still, so passionless,
Ne'er words could paint in deepest fancy's dream
Nor that brow's majesty could faint express,
Nor tell the great long almond eyeball's gleam
Piercing, yet pitiful; the mien supreme,
The beardless chin and grave mouth's full, firm line
Conjoined to make a contour all divine.

As type of strength two horns—in shape new moons'
Thin arcs are they, "illuminate and lowne,"
Ripen to crossets of mid-months' white noons,
Around the mighty form flowed ample down
(Throat-latched by Upper Egypt's feathered crown)
An opalescent mantle to the feet—
A regal vestiture, vague, wizard, meet.

Not raiment this, not web of woof or die—
But as when human vision would devise
The outline of the sun at noontide high,
Yet sees but dancing prisms—so the eyes
That saw Osiris knew not if in size
He were a naked form, vast, undefined,
Or a draped figure present to the mind.

And as this Presence sate upon the throne
There slid out of the dark till dimly seen
A ghastly company, stern as of stone,
No man could number nor say who had been,
Their dry forms through their ceraments showing green
And phosphorescent, as in waves on waves
These dead spectators came from out their graves.

Profoundly silent all. No motion broke
Nor whisper from that ghostly multitude,
'Twas scene such as a sorcerer might evoke
From out of hades in his wildest mood,
Till sudden, startling as a bell-stroke would,
A voice came like a storm-sough from the north
And spake the words: "Let the Accused stand forth!"

FYTTE THE SECOND.

Slow came before the throne and the stern line
Of the demones and assessors grim,
A female form most delicately fair
Of perfect symmetry and grace of limb,
Who stood before the Judge, and looked at him
With a proud regal port that seemed to be
A challenge made to an equality.

Roheless was she as when laid on her bier,
The perfect semblance now that she had borne,
For Anubis the angel brought her here
To shew the body she on earth had worn

Nor yet did tell good deeds done in the land;
Nor advocate did take the cause in hand,
But the accused stood, no one by her side,
Calm, proud, imperious, haught and monarch-eyed

Then Thoth the writer took his tablet up
Where he had writ the record clear and fair,
And Anubis the weigher placed the cup
Of good deeds done in one scale to compare,
And in the other laid the brazen square
'Gainst which good mitigating acts are weighed,
While anxious all looked as the balance played.

The beam's vibration quivered to and fro,
A flicker through the golden balance run
Quickly at first, then slowly growing slow
Till fell the the brazen square with motion none,
Showing the ill was more than good was done.
Then Apophis the snake stood forth and cried
In eerie tone, "This woman's cause is tried."

FYTTE THE THIRD.

May mortal tongue describe the august sounds
When a god speaks and the empyrean fills,
Loudly, in crashing thunder's dreadful rounds
Reverberating 'mong the canyoned hills,
Or, lowly, in the prattle of the rills,
Or in the sad sea's murmur when it grieves,
Or in the stealthy whisper of the leaves?

The judge Osiris spoke the direful doom:
"Daughter of balanced deeds, nor ill nor great,
Gay thing of whim, as frail as blossom bloom,
Too good art thou for hell, for heaven too late,
Too slight for purging fires, too delicate,
Due transmigration let thy soul enclasp
And for one cycle* be a lamian asp."

With piercing shriek the sentenced soul fell down
In writhing on the ebon paven floor,
Her self-long hair that clothed her like a gown
Shrivelled to nothingness,—own form no more
But likeness of a spotted snake she bore,
Her white and carmine tints grew flecked with bars
And even shone out on her and phosphor stars.

Yet with a grace of motion. As she moved
The line of beauty to her progress clave
Though prone, in saltant spasms as behooved
Her new form, and a scintillation gave
As you have seen an undulating wave
Crested with light though body all a-green,
So undulated Egypt's hapless queen.

Meantime the antic pageant's bloodred glare
Deadened as metal taken from the fire,
And in the places where the figures were
Swam but faint films; soon even these expire
And the tenebrous ring contracting higher
Shrunk to one vivid spot; then out the spark
And once more fell the horror of the dark.

Long centuries have trailed since these accords
And Egypt's fate has veered for good and ill,
The Roman, Moslem, French and British hordes
Have made her weakness subject to their will,
But the sad sentenced Cleopatra still
Doth undulate athwart the lilied meads
Or by the Nile's banks hisses 'mong the reeds.

HERNEWOOD, P. E. I.

THE END.

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*2000 years.